

Also, it creates a VA advisory committee on chiropractic health care.

Thank you Chairman Rockefeller, Senator Specter and Senator Daschle, as well as Mr. Filner and Mr. Evans, who worked with me to achieve this compromise for an effective new program of VA chiropractic health care.

Requires VA Secretary to assess special telephone services made available to veterans, such as "help lines" and "hotlines," with a report to Congress.

Provides authority for Secretary to study, then if found feasible, obtain a personal emergency-notification and response system for service-disabled veterans.

Authorizes critically necessary construction project at the Miami, Florida VA Medical Center.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, this bill will improve veterans' health care programs as well as assist the VA's health care personnel to provide quality care to our nation's veterans, especially those most seriously disabled and least able to help themselves.

Veterans of our armed forces deserve a dependable and innovative system of health care and benefits. This bill increases our ability to meet the needs of veterans, who have sacrificed to meet ours.

I am proud to be an original cosponsor of the Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Enhancement Act of 2001, and I want to thank the other Members and staff who have worked hard to finish this bill in the first session of this Congress. I particularly want to recognize my friend, Mr. FILNER of California, and Susan Edgerton and John Bradley, our Staff Directors of the Health Subcommittee, as well as Bill Cahill and Kim Lipsky, professional staff members of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs. These and other staff have worked closely with us to achieve this legislation on behalf of America's veterans.

REMOVAL OF MRS. BIGGERT'S  
NAME AS CO-SPONSOR OF H.R. 3295

**HON. ROBERT W. NEY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2001*

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker, the House printing deadline prohibited me from removing the gentlewoman from Illinois, Mrs. Biggert, from the list of co-sponsors of H.R. 3295. Mrs. Biggert's name was added as a cosponsor of H.R. 3295 in error. Had I not been precluded from doing so, I would have taken to the floor to correct this situation and ask unanimous consent that her name be removed from the co-sponsor list.

TRIBUTE TO HOOPS SAGRADO  
(SACRED HOOPS)

**HON. HAROLD E. FORD, JR.**

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Thursday, December 13, 2001*

Mr. FORD. Mr. Speaker, once in a while on this floor, we have the privilege to leave poli-

tics behind and recognize the outstanding achievements of Americans.

So today I would like to pay tribute to a group of young Americans—very close to my heart—that have become ambassadors of the playground.

In 1999, my friend Bryan Weaver founded a non-profit group named Hoops Sagrado. Hoops Sagrado is a cultural exchange program that is using the game of basketball to help bring a better life to two groups with seemingly little in common, young adults from the urban center that is Washington, DC, and young Mayans from the rural western highlands of Guatemala.

Despite the difference in cultures, the group share a common passion: They both love playing basketball. Hoops Sagrado is named after a Native American belief that all races are connected through the sacred hoops of life, and must live in balance with one another to survive.

These young men and women are doing their part to fulfill what Dr. Martin Luther King said was "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, what are you doing for others?"

For the last two years I have had the great privilege of serving as an honorary chair of the Hoops Sagrado project, and was thus especially pleased to see that last week the Washington Post devoted a Metro Section series to Hoops Sagrado's mission in Guatemala. The series highlighted the hope that Hoops Sagrado brings to these young people from Guatemala and America, a disproportionate portion of whom are raised by single mothers, and touched by the scourge of violence.

With great pride in the achievements of Hoops Sagrado, I urge all Americans to follow their example in touching young people, and review the Washington Post series published during the week of November 25, 2001 and describing how they overcame hardship to build bridges of friendship.

Finally, I would like to thank them and their sponsors Ben Cohen, Phil and Jan Fenty of Fleetfeet, and The National Basketball Association for the important and honest work they did as ambassadors on behalf of this country.

[From the Washington Post, Nov. 25, 2001]

Ambassadors of the Playground

By Sylvia Moreno

Two vans stuffed with tall, gangly teenagers, oversize suitcases and boxes of basketballs wend sluggishly westward from the Guatemala City airport on a muggy summer night, the riders seeing this new world through the prism of the one they just left.

"This looks like Georgetown," says 17-year-old Max Costa as the van he rides in passes a few blocks of small shops and boutiques.

Moments later, whoops and hollers greet the sight of a Wendy's, one of several fast-food restaurants on the outskirts of the capital.

"This looks like the Adams Morgan part of town," Max announces excitedly, as they pass strip malls punctuated with neon signs and billboards advertising a Burger King and a Domino's Pizza. "That's straight, joe!"

They get to the ancient and picturesque city of Antigua close to midnight, and as they stroll the historical streets, their minds are fixed on things such as finding a burger or a hip-hop disco. They encounter neither.

They are more than 3,000 miles from home—in body, perhaps, not in spirit. This

trip is supposed to show them that there's so much beyond the 'hood, but they're still looking for home.

The ancient colonial arch in Antigua is compared to McDonald's. They it look at stunning examples of centuries-old Spanish architecture and Antonio "Biggie" Dupree, 18, asks:

"Is that a church? That's big, dog!" His friends call him Biggie because he looks like one of their idols, the late rapper Notorious B.I.G.—except Biggie has a baby face and a soft voice.

He walks through a small plaza lined by grand 16th-century ruins—convents and churches toppled in 1773 by an earthquake that forever changed the face of this former Central American capital. But looking at the massive stone walls with small, high-set windows, Biggie says, "Imagine what it would be like to be in one of these Guatemala jails."

A GRAND VISION

That night was the first in a three-week journey to the lush highlands of western Guatemala, a country of spectacular beauty and stark oppression, poverty and hunger. Group members came to play hoops, but they had been told they would do much, much more.

These African American teenagers—nine from the District, two from Montgomery County—were to see some of the country's most cherished sites, take Spanish classes, conduct daily basketball clinics for Mayan children and repair basketball courts for a poor, mountainside school.

They had come as representatives of Hoops Sagrado (Sacred Hoops), a fledgling non-profit group whose leader hoped that such an experience would instill leadership skills and a sense of community service in disadvantaged youths through playing and coaching basketball. For the players, it was a free trip, a chance to get out of Washington, to see things, to enjoy themselves. Their leader had a grander mission in mind.

Bryan Weaver founded Hoops Sagrado in 1996 after his first visit to Guatemala, when he was struck by the role that hardscrabble basketball courts played as social centers of indigenous Mayan villages. He returned in 1999, bringing one of the African American kids whom he coached in youth leagues in Adams Morgan and Columbia Heights. Last year, he brought three. He was convinced that African American and Mayan kids could learn valuable lessons from each other. They are unlike racially, culturally and linguistically, but they face the same problems of bigotry, street violence and relegation to the margins of their societies.

Bryan expected members of his group to grow in self-confidence from coaching kids and to realize that they were not alone with their problems—that others might have even harder lives. And the Mayan youngsters, he figured, would benefit from the court moves his players could teach and be inspired to strive for more in their lives than a sixth-grade education and recycling the meager lives of their parents, grandparents and great-grand parents. To help the Mayan kids, Bryan also started a scholarship program to help keep girls in school past sixth grade, when free public education ends in most indigenous villages, unlike in the cities, which get enough resources to pay for public education through 12th grade.

He figured that this—the third summer of the program—would be pivotal.

He had joined forces with directors of the Shiloh Development Community, a teenage mentoring project in Columbia Heights, and with the addition of the Shiloh group was

bringing the largest number of players yet to Guatemala: 11. He had included two girls, hoping that they would serve as role models for the Mayan girls who also would turn out for the basketball clinics.

There were preparatory meetings, with Bryan telling the players about Guatemala's indigenous Mayan community and urging them to heed the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.'s challenge: "The most urgent and pressing question in life is what are you doing for others."

He was focused on lofty ideals and aspirations. But the players including one young man who, despite two previous trips with him to Guatemala, was still fighting the lure of the street—presented the kind of mundane and vexing problems that young people sometimes exhibit: Stubbornness. Laziness. Lack of common sense. Failure to think through the consequences of their actions. Anger. Indifference to other people and their problems.

The oldest and the veteran of these trips was Sean Thomas, 23, who in his mid-teens was sent to a drug boot camp and was slowly realizing that he needed to break out of Adams Morgan to straighten out his life. He was flashy and street smart but erratic—Just like one of his favorite ballplayers, former Sacramento Kings point guard Jason Williams. Sean wore his Williams Jersey in Antigua and tried out the little Spanish he remembered from his two previous summers in Guatemala: *Vamos, chicas*. "Let's go, girls."

The first female Hoops Sagrado volunteer, 16-year-old Carrie Sartin—a tall, thin Sheryl Swoopes wannabe, walked the cobblestone roads of Antigua that first night, carrying "T& Whiskers," a black and white stuffed cat she had brought along. "They have rocks as streets," she said later.

The guys also included Clayton Mitchell, a brash 18-year-old, who walked through Antigua's empty and peaceful central plaza at midnight, pausing for a moment to advise the others: "Enjoy the night. You can't do this in D.C."

Dwayne Crossgill, 18, knew that. An all-around athlete, Dwayne ran track and played football and basketball. He longed for opportunities to get out of the District. He thought that there was more to life than the view from his second-story apartment in Columbia Heights, where he lives with his mother. There, drug dealers stand on stoops and push their wares. Dwayne had heard the occasional gunshot. He had attended more than one friend's funeral.

"Living in D.C., I realize there's a lot of bad in the world, a lot of crimes," he said before he left for Guatemala. "It's good to see the there's other ways of life."

Bryan eventually found out—that the hard way—that teenagers who don't know each other don't magically get along and that even the most well-meaning adult counselors can clash. He later realized that his charges were not as prepared as they should have been about the culture and mores of Guatemala, about how to talk, act and dress in a vastly different culture. And he also discovered how hard it can be to persuade a teenager that behavior or dress that is acceptable in Washington could easily be offensive or provocative in a Mayan village.

But those lessons came later.

#### TRYING TO CONNECT

Bryan had brought with him the autobiography "I, Rigoberta Menchu," and a few days after the group got to Guatemala, he asked Sean to read to the group a paragraph from Chapter 1, in hopes of setting the right tone

for the trip. Menchu is a Mayan who grew up not far from where the Hoops Sagrado team was headed.

During Guatemala's 37-year civil war, as she tells the story, members of her family were raped and killed, like hundreds of thousands of Mayan Indians. Menchu, living in exile in Mexico, won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1992 for her work in promoting social justice and human rights for Guatemala's indigenous people. The work has been criticized for exaggeration and misstatements, although it has also been widely praised as an accurate portrait of what it was like in Guatemala in those years.

Menchu was Sean's age, 23, when she told the story of her life, a narrative that turned into the book. So Bryan hoped the words would resonate with him, as well as the others as they embarked upon their journey into the Mayan world:

"I'd like to stress it's not only my life. It's also the testimony of my people. It's hard for me to remember everything that's happened to me in my life since there have been many very bad times but, yes, moments of joy as well," Sean read haltingly.

"The important thing is that what has happened to me has happened to many other people, too: My story is the story of all poor Guatemalans. My personal experience is the reality of a whole people."

#### SO DIFFERENT, SO SIMILAR

But that first night, Menchu's world was far removed from these young people, armed with their headphones and gangsta rap and hip-hop CDs. Their T-shirts bore the slogans: "Thug Life" and "Scarface," "Kids and Guns Don't Mix" and "Sexy." And on their feet they wore the equivalent of what could pay for several school scholarships for Mayan children: silver Nike Solo Flights and black patent-toe Air Jordans; leather Reeboks and New Balance cross-trainers.

What they did share with many Mayan children wasn't so obvious: broken homes, families wracked by alcohol or substance abuse, apathy and discrimination.

Daily, the Hoops Sagrado team would travel a road up a mountain to get to the village of Xecam and the basketball clinics. It was a strain, up a steep and gutted road, marked by hairpin curves and treacherous cliffs.

But the real effort, it turned out, would come from within. The road from Washington to Guatemala and back was marked by tears, turmoil, anger, doubt and misunderstanding.

Dwayne's favorite T-shirt was imprinted with the words of a Swahili slogan that bore the prophecy for this group. "Life has meaning only in the struggles," it read. "Victory or defeat is in the hands of the gods. So let us celebrate the struggles."

There were plenty of struggles ahead.

#### INTERGOVERNMENTAL LAW ENFORCEMENT INFORMATION SHARING ACT OF 2001 H.R. 3483

#### HON. STEPHEN HORN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, December 13, 2001

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, today, I am introducing the Intergovernmental Law Enforcement Information Sharing Act of 2001. This bipartisan bill is designed to increase the flow of critical information among Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies.

Interagency cooperation has always been an important factor in protecting the safety and security of this Nation. But the unimaginable events of September 11 and the ensuing Anthrax attacks have drawn unparalleled attention to the need for a timely interchange of meaningful information.

I am pleased to have bipartisan support of this legislation from my colleagues: Mr. BURTON of Indiana, chairman of Government Reform Committee, Mr. SHAYS from Connecticut, who is chairman of the Subcommittee on National Security, Veterans Affairs, and International Relations; Ms. SCHAKOWSKY from Illinois, Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Government Efficiency, Financial Management and Intergovernmental Relations, which I chair; and Mrs. MALONEY from New York, Ranking Member on the Subcommittee on Domestic Monetary Policy, Technology, and Economic Growth and former Ranking Member of my subcommittee.

On October 5th of this year, the Subcommittee on Government Efficiency, Financial Management and Intergovernmental Relations held a hearing on bio-terrorism. During that hearing, Baltimore Police Commissioner Edward T. Norris testified that the FBI did not provide his agency with adequate descriptions or photographs of those suspected of participating in the September 11th attacks until weeks after the tragic events.

Following the hearing, FBI Director Robert S. Mueller pledged to increase the role of non-Federal law enforcement agencies in the Government's efforts to combat terrorism, and to share more information with State and local agencies. On November 13th, our subcommittee held joint hearing with Mr. SHAY's subcommittee to discuss the Federal Government's efforts to enhance information sharing with State and local governments.

Local officials, including Commissioner Norris, testified that progress had been made in intelligence sharing with Federal agencies. However, their inability to obtain classified information remained a significant impediment to their ability to prepare for potential terrorist threats within their jurisdictions. The bill I am introducing today addresses that problem.

H.R. 3483 would require the Attorney General to carry out security clearance investigations of senior government and law enforcement officials of any political subdivision of a State or territory with a population of 30,000. In addition, the bill requires the Attorney General to conduct security clearance investigations of senior law enforcement officials whose agency participates in a Federal counter-terrorism task force or working group.

Upon successful completion of these investigations, the Attorney General is to grant the appropriate security clearances. The cost of such investigations is to be paid by the requesting State or local agency, not the Federal Government.

This legislation also calls for the Attorney General to conduct a study to examine methods of enhancing the sharing of sensitive Federal law enforcement information with State, territorial and local officials. The study would include a review of appropriate safeguards to protect confidential sources and methods, mechanisms for determining the credibility of information relating to potential threats, and restrictions on access to Federal databases.